

APPENDIX A

Rhode Island LSTA Focus Group Report

Five focus group discussions were held September 27th-September 29th to gather input from the Rhode Island library community on the 2003-2007 LSTA Plan. The sessions were held at the North Kingstown Free Library, the Rochambeau Branch of the Providence Public Library, the Cranston Public Library (two sessions), and the East Providence Public Library. Participants in each session shared a common interest, i.e., public library directors, RIFLI Literacy Program teachers and students, children's and youth services librarians, school librarians, and academic librarians. A total of forty-three people took part in the sessions.

At each session the participants discussed which of the programs and services of the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) were most important to their library, how OLIS programs and services might be changed to be more effective, what OLIS could stop doing, and what the participants saw as the top two priorities for the coming five year plan.

Each session ended with "final say," which provided the participants with the opportunity to sum what they thought was most important in the discussion or to bring up new topics not addressed by the group in answering the consultant's questions. The report that follows provides an executive summary of the general themes that emerged and a more detailed summary of each of the sessions.

Executive Summary

In part because each of the sessions was comprised of different interest groups within the library community, general themes are a bit difficult to trace across the different sessions. Some of the key points stressed were

- OLIS needs greater/better funding.
- Children's services and continuing education are very important OLIS services.
- A strong point of the current literacy program is that "being in the library is what makes the program work. It would be hard to recreate the experience outside the library – we're trying to make lifelong learners."
- The managers and teachers in the RIFLI program perceive that LSTA funding is not an ideal ongoing source, but "we need to get ongoing help from somewhere."
- Children's and youth services librarians appreciate their interaction with the state children's consultant whom they find supportive and responsive to their requests and needs.
- Youth services librarians want to develop teen services more fully.
- Children's and youth librarians support the family literacy program.
- Bilingual services is a huge issue for Providence.
- A single uniform catalog and a database program for the state are a priority.
- Academic librarians feel they lack information about OLIS.

There were eight participants; their tenure at their current library ranged from “a few months” to thirty-four years.

OLIS uses a combination of state and LSTA funds, as well as a number of partnerships, to carry out the goals and objectives of their 5 year LSTA plan. Which two programs or services of the OLIS are most important to your library? Why?

Delivery system for interlibrary loan

We get it 5 days per week... would like six; delivery is very important to us
Some of the support in terms of consultancy - isn't a lot but being able to call and say “can you give me an idea of where to go?”... Melody (state children's consultant) is very important.

Children's is most important because many of the small libraries don't have a separate children's coordinator.

Continuing education both for children's and others

CE has really improved in the last five years.. they've really put a push on it
They're great on technology – blogging and Wikis, e.g., really good programs and they're all free and we can send our staff.

You call and say, “we'd like X” and the next thing you know they're offering it.
The young adult support is good. Frank Iacono ran them. Frank was in charge of the professional library at OLIS too. You wonder what will happen to our professional services now that he's gone?
I'm a regular user of the professional collection.

Advocacy regarding the 25% match of municipal funding and the construction money are important. State aid is 25% of municipal expenditure two years prior... (includes endowment expenditures). OLIS administers it.
The aid and maintenance of effort help me with my town council/board. I tell them,
“Every dollar you cut we lose a dollar and we lose it all if you don't maintain effort.”

Standards... although I hate them...help to push the municipality – we got initial staff to meet standards.
There are 54 standards.... We have lots of private not for profit libraries; 44% of the libraries are private, but most get most of their \$\$ from municipalities.
I was on the other side of the issue of including the endowment money funding; I wanted the governments to step up.
For me, OLIS' best aspect is that they're not acting as a bad cop; they're there to help us. They're really trying to get you your funding... they're not punitive.
They're easy to work with.
The last few months they've been a wealth of information to me as a new director.

They help with the summer reading program support; provide information and statistics; they make it easier to do what we do.

Talking Books Plus is a wonderful service. I'm a small library and I refer people to them all the time. It's the only thing like it. They're getting even better service now that OLIS isn't doing it themselves. They've outsourced it and they coordinate the program. We're a small state and OLIS doesn't get a lot of federal funding... and they don't get much state money at all... they're very poorly funded. They were part of the Department of State and they got demoted!

OLIS website as a portal... what's useful there?

The communication is good. I use their blog and check on it. Saw the thing about the Friends group and passed it on to my Friends. Check the job line... children's discussion group... Found out about the lead toys.

They're good about sending e-mails out as well. Often refer me to something else on the web site.

I use the site for directions to libraries, phone numbers.

I wish ALA's website was as easy to navigate.

Sheila Carlson and the help with the e-rate program are helpful to me.

They lend a people counter... and some other equipment.

How has your use of OLIS changed in the past five years?

One of the things they've started doing is relaying messages regarding grant information, Humanities, etc.

We have a literacy program and we just couldn't do it without the LSTA money. They also do the LTV television program... Cox Cable Public Access Cable award... They do the editing.

How does LSTA support impact individual users?

We had an LSTA grant to do literacy programs. If it wasn't for Providence Public's picking it up, getting part of the money through OLIS, it would be very difficult.

There was a big impact when LSCA went to LSTA - had Title VI literacy money and it went away.

Coventry gets money as well as Providence.

There were other grants for digitization. There used to be more competitive grants. Now it's just the chunk to family literacy and to the school libraries.

Wasn't there some money that went toward Innovative Interfaces? We wouldn't have been able to do that (\$ 50,000) (CLAN) to help pay for the shift from Horizon to Innovative.

How could the current programs be changed to be more effective?

The state needs to put more in so the LSTA could be used for more competitive grants like they do in Massachusetts.

The plan has some stuff in it about sharing collections, etc. That seems to be something that they can't get around to doing. They don't have the room to store the collections. I feel badly that we haven't had the expertise/space to collect those specialty things. (Polish materials are an example.)

Other ways that programs could be changed to be more effective? Are there other things that libraries could do cooperatively?

We already do a lot – purchase databases through CLAN. There's been some move toward one catalog for the state. If state funds were available, we could do it.

ILL/resource sharing is what we do mostly.

Technology assistance – You call Rick with a technology issue; you wouldn't go to OLIS with that question, that would be a CLAN question.

What used to be in files (collection development policies, etc.) you just go online and ask for.

What does the state library pay for in terms of summer reading?

They pay for the performers... provide a voucher for some things.

There aren't that many services that OLIS is involved in... They have a person with construction expertise, but they can only do so much.

As a new director... I can call Karen with a construction question and she can refer me to others.

Our library couldn't have the number of programs in the summer without the OLIS assistance.

We haven't had very good connections with school libraries. The Department of Education doesn't have a library person. My community doesn't support school libraries very well. Unfortunately, if the students don't learn about libraries in school, they may not be public library users in the future.

It effects our library; I have to buy a lot of stuff that looks a lot like curriculum support.

Are there any services that have little impact and that could be eliminated? What could OLIS stop doing?

I don't think that there is any fat there at all; I would like to see them doing more.

Coming from Mass... there was a lot more assistance. Here they send you to another library (which is OK), but they need to be stronger. They need the State to fully fund them and support them as a department rather than something subsumed under something else.

How could they focus what they've got better?

When I was looking at the plan I saw that there was a lot regarding people with physical disabilities. I think that they put a lot into this area when we have lots of people with "educational disabilities." I don't see them coming through my doors and I see lots with educational deficits... it's not just the literacy... some of it is

economic... some language, some a class (group of people) that isn't used to using libraries.

Public relations is an area that they're not good at. They had a position for about 18 months, but they had to let the position go. It's an area where they could be really helpful.

OLIS could coordinate PR/advocacy. They're part of the state government so they're limited in what they can do.

More coordination of the PR marketing piece.

There's been a great effort to bring all of the libraries up to a certain standard and I think that they've largely accomplished that, but there are lots of people who don't know about the services.

Something that just popped into my head is the multi-type aspect. They haven't done a very good job of focusing on that. If we want all of the libraries to work together, they should be doing more with that.

I disagree with that. Since becoming IMLS, I think they spent TOO much time on the schools and academics.

One particular program on the office of the experience economy - out of the box looking at how libraries do business. – Futures Conference.

Yes, looking at what are the new possibilities

We'd like them to take more of a leadership role. They used to run things and we don't want that. They act as a conduit now, but we want something in between.

There was resentment at one point.

There were required meetings!

Would we like to see a requirement for professionals? The standards require only a minimal amount of continuing education.

LAMA program is very disappointing.

Certification in non-profit management...

If we had specific CE requirements, that would be good and would push things forward.

It would be at least for all professionals.

The 55th standard... just beef up the one that's already there... one is already CE.

Final say?

I think OLIS is important, but it needs to be upgraded (state funding) to be a better supporter of public libraries.

What OLIS does it does extremely well, but they're very limited – the bottom line is more state funding.

I think that the key is their lack of funding and strength. The libraries of the state have done a lot of what state agencies do in other states, CLAN, for example.

There are three networks by type of libraries. There is interest in more coordination, but OLIS isn't strong enough to do it.

I really don't have anything to add.

I'm trying to think what they could do without more funding and I think we certainly have had some people with some strength and they couldn't get more money. Their strengths are delivery and children's services; that's what they do well and they need to keep those strong.

We are changing the name of CLAN. "CLAN" had negative connotations. We've talked about how other organizations have had to step forward to do what the State Library does in other states, but we have the same model at the local level as well, non-profits do what governments should do there as well.

If we have to build on the strengths that already are there, there should be someone available so that if there is a thorny issue you could turn to someone. We need actual people with expertise. (somebody in a library who knows how to deal with a contractor that is gouging for example.)

As part of that, if the person (expert) represents other types of libraries, then we need to be more connected, There is some overlap and we could help each other in lots of ways.

They had the LORI committee, but we had nothing to do because the committee had no authority.

I'm sensing that there is a bit of a disconnect. OLIS wants some more money, but they can't lobby for it.. How are they going to get more money? The Rhode Island Library Association and the Friends, etc. really pushed and what came out of it was confusion. The legislature ended up taking out the money.

The problems of the Providence Public Library have colored the whole thing. PPL has had such awful publicity that it has hurt all of us.

CLAN is getting stronger; it's going to be interesting. CLAN will need a strong OLIS and OLIS needs a strong CLAN.

RIFLI Literacy Program Teachers and Students September 27, 2006

There were eleven participants in the session, representing both literacy teachers and students. Teachers provided an overview of the program to date. Part of the "uniqueness" of the program is being in library branches and linking to libraries both in terms of resources and curriculum.

What are the challenges/obstacles to be overcome with the program?

Most of the students are low income and they're dealing with a lot of challenges. It's hard for them to make it to all the classes; their shift may change at work. They're facing challenges that make learning really hard. We make lots of referrals to help them resolve other issues.

One of the goals this year – we've be looking at a research-based approach, trying to provide ongoing support.

Funding environment is very unstable; we had tried to get a United Way grant for a case manager, but we didn't get funded for that and so the lead teachers end up carrying heavier loads.

The reason that we didn't get the United Way grant was there was talk of Providence libraries closing branches.

Students, what have been the biggest challenges or obstacles you've had to deal with?

We haven't had enough materials to continue the education, audio books and so on. Not enough time in class; you need 3 or four times each week.

There are a lot of people asking for the program. But the time classes are available isn't the best. Evening classes would be better to improve the program. That is true. Also not enough space; there's a waiting list of about 15 people.

The program is limited by the space that the library provides. I was trying to give a test and it was noisy. The library cutback in hours has been problematic. It's something we face a lot.

The program is really based on being in the library, but we are having one of the programs out of the library. The library had a roof problem and so we went around the corner and we've moved in there. It's a beautiful space but not having the library right there has been a disadvantage.

One of our goals is to create library users.

Computers are also a challenge here. There are a lot of people who want to use the computers.

A class is between 15 and 20 adults and 10 to 15 children.... Two volunteers...

With those numbers we're trying to take in as many as we can but still provide a quality program.

How do you recruit the students?

Word of mouth is our best recruitment. Since we've been doing it for 20 years, people know about us. We got so many calls from a radio program.

Also we distribute fliers.

The challenge of getting students is less, but it's more getting the family units to participate, maintaining the family literacy piece has been difficult.

How has the program changed, how has the audience changed?

With the addition of the coordinators, we've been able to do better outreach.

More testing, better connections... babysitting has turned into learning opportunities.

West Warwick is self-funded. They spun off; their program is similar.

There hasn't been a big change; change depends on the neighborhood.

Showing outcomes is difficult. The biggest request is for more hours. Other trends... more unemployed students than ever before.. interest in citizenship has grown. Right now the adult education has been going through reform.. They are raising the bar with adult standards and curriculum. All of us are experiencing those changes. The level of professionalism has changed. We've had less turnover in teachers. We're all full time and we all work 12 months a year.

We've had as many as 101 volunteers in the past; have been going for quality rather than quantity. Have kids and retirees as volunteers.

How else would you improve the program?

Computer skills are a great necessity and we're lucky that the libraries have up to date computers. We don't have enough computers. We've instituted "leveling" of the programs. Incredible - I teach three classes at one library. Even the top level isn't at a very high level.

There's not enough capacity at the second step of the program. There are money, time and motivation limits. Need more materials for each of the libraries. In this big branch we have only a few items and not for all of the countries represented by the students. People come from Russia, Japan, etc.

One of the huge pieces that we're moving toward is perhaps an online portal where people can practice. Providence PL bought a license to Rosetta Stone. A lot of people use that. It's all down to the funding on that!

What could OLIS do that would help the program?

It would be good if the state would fund OLIS so that more money could go toward programs like the literacy program.

The paperwork is a problem. It would be nice to not have to apply for the money. It takes a lot of manpower to do the grant paperwork.

Do you get the feeling that OLIS supports this kind of program? LSTA funds are generally directed toward innovative, experimental programs?

I think that they don't understand how big the program is and how many people we impact.

I was reading the environmental scan in the LSTA plan. There are many areas with lots of needs. But OLIS puts a low amount into it.

Our grant gets smaller every year.

The longevity is one of the things that makes the program work.

Are there other areas that you want to branch into with more funding?

The online portal. That would be a way to offer more practice time for our students.

We do see ourselves as being innovative. We're not under any outside influence to determine how to do things. We have the ability to look at family literacy and define better for ourselves how to structure the program. It's easier to get individuals rather than families. Families get a priority with us.

I know the focus is on outcomes; the students that take part in the program show results.

We only have about a 60% graduation rate in Pawtucket; We need to do something about that.

We're going to be able to capture some of those outcomes. We are putting our student information into the database; may experiment with portfolios and have their experiences carry forward.

The MIS system is doing the tracking.

Share some of the success stories.

There are successes with kids who started in the program; they're in high school now and they're in the library; they bring their friends into the library and they're really comfortable in the library.

The mother got her citizenship and she attributes it to gaining her English skills in the program.

I interpret for others now (one of the student participants).

We're very goal oriented; we've been piloting, experimenting with smaller focused programs.

All of our teachers are teaching financial literacy, interaction with the health system; we're addressing many specific areas with our classes.

For me the most important aspect is connecting the learner with the library. The first week in the country they bring their family to the library. It's nice to have that focus in the community.

I was going to echo that – The library is the center of the community in Pawtucket. It's such a perfect fit.

One of our goals is to get the children integrated into the other library programs, such as story hours etc.

Depending on the nature of the program at the individual library, the kids from the literacy programs are part of those children's programs, Mt. Pleasant's "Bedtime Stories" for example.

In the philosophy of family literacy the question is how do we make better connection with the schools.

I think that the number one goal of most of our students is to help their children with school.

My challenge as a teacher is always how do I transfer that learning to the home.

We need more people to come in, especially the older people who don't understand any English. We need the translators to help talk with them.

Final say?

I (student) wish that this program would never stop; it helps a lot of immigrant families.

When I came to this country, I had a degree, but I wasn't able to work in my area. It was an amazing experience for me to be a part of the program.

I would second what some others have said; it's being in the library that makes the program work. It would be hard to recreate the experience outside the library – we're trying to make lifelong learners.

I enjoyed listening to everybody here.

I don't know whether you're the ones I should be telling this. We need to invite more people in who could be advocates for us. There is a steering committee made up of librarians. We need an advisory board, alumni group, etc.

My other point is that the Rhode Island Department of Education is raising the bar for teachers, which is good. Our teachers are committed and have great skills, but they're not compensated for their skills. All of that goes back to impact on students.

I also enjoyed hearing what you have to say; I don't always get to the meetings. I don't want to use LSTA year after year, but we need to get ongoing help from somewhere.

Why isn't some of the state money put into this? Why aren't the lead roles recognized year after year after year?

Being focused is difficult; it's difficult to do everything.

We're far from meeting the need. Sometimes we don't get the money from other sources because others are doing literacy, but the most widely attended program at the library is literacy.

It's the money... we want to adequately compensate our teachers.

Children's and Youth Services Librarians

September 28, 2006

There were twelve participants in the session, which included both children's and teen librarians. Some had also been school librarians.

Which OLIS programs/services are most important to you?

Services through Melody—continuing education, coordination of summer reading statewide—makes us look good

Actually getting our grant in aid (not just children's services)...getting the dollars is great.

The young adult round table—gives us a chance to interact. (It includes school librarians as well. There are perhaps only 3 or 4 librarians doing teen services full time in the state)

All the professional materials we get come through state library; we don't buy a \$35/reference for our own collections---having someone at the state level keeping up with that is important.

Summer reading, but specifically having the performers at an affordable cost. We can't afford them during the rest of the year.

Professional development—we have a full day in the spring—really wonderful day in March Last year we had Michael Sullivan—some of us had heard him speak at a library association conference—we got Melody to get him for his day long session. Melody and Frank helped facilitate that.

They're very responsive. Melody always does whatever she can. She's on target; she has a children's services advisory council that most of us have served on. She always listens to committee and others. She tries to get people from all over the state. (They also select the performers.)

Performers benefit large and small libraries as well; every library (branch) is considered a library for the summer programs.

Performers are important, but the coordination of the summer reading program is sooo helpful—getting us together, finding corporate sponsorship.

How do feel about the national consortium?

Great.

It supports the children's end, but not the teens

I think the teen portion will improve.

Makes good PR because we'll all do the same thing.

But it doesn't cookie cutter the program; gives us the opportunity to participate.

My program budget for the year is \$300—but this program reduces the stigma of being a small library. I don't have to compete. This money puts us all in a very positive spot with the public

Because we don't have it in the teen area, we had to develop that ourselves. It's hard for us to gather that money. We don't need big money, but we exhaust the local businesses quickly in getting money to support programming.

The ready made corporate sponsorships really are a help. Teen service just hasn't evolved that much yet and it's hard to do. (Frank was so helpful)

My concern is the in-between age group—the 'tweens—I'd like to see children's services develop more for 4th-8th graders. It's good that they don't perceive the library as nerdy, but we need to target that group more.

How have things changed in last 3-5 years?

Idea of teen services—we were doing on our own, now the state is involved.

Emergent literacy is here now; we were just in early stages 5 years ago; have had a lot of workshops and opportunities to write grants to get money to fund different aspects of that program

It's really a national thing and Melody brought it home for us. Emergent literacy has happened in last 3 years. Having the state support was huge.

Making it a continuous department—children and teens.—with specialists for various age groups

That 4th-7th grade group really needs a focus. I've just called it the 'tweens here at this library.

Have come of age in linking library services with whole family and whole individual; have connected with literacy....developing the brain with music...Melody's position is sooo important. She'll be retiring soon and that position has to continue.

Using our knowledge of brain development has informed how we do library services. We call it Mother Goose, but it connects us with other organizations/states, and getting funds from various other places. Teaching math through literature, etc. First we did science, then math; mother nature. We're helping teachers and parents with education in the home. Before this children's services suffered from being cute—we provided crafts. In last 10 years there has developed a real depth and substance to what we offer. Melody has been the real conduit for that.

What's your relationship with schools; what's the status of school libraries?

Our schools are under funded for libraries; they're all over the map in terms of support.

Few of the school libraries are current with their books; we get requests for classroom sets of books. Schools should be doing that; but it varies from year to year (whether a school focuses on supporting their libraries or not)

In summer we all feel the effects—every school system has mandatory reading; and the public libraries lend them the books. It costs us a few hundred dollars every summer to replace things.

And, they give us the lists on the last day of school (books out of print, end of the budget year....) parents get frustrated with us because we aren't ready.

I have a good relationship with school librarians in my community, but even they get frustrated because they don't have input on the summer reading in some cases. Changes with curriculum.

Media specialists are the first ones cut. Many school libraries are inadequately staffed. We build a relationship with them, but they don't get enough either.

When Melody had Michael Sullivan here, the teachers came too and were able to get CE credit.

Is serving home schoolers an issue?

Yes for some; others not. Greenville does a lot, it's pockets—much bigger in rural areas. We get participants from other areas. We have an unofficial council of home school families we work with to coordinate things.

How might OLIS improve efficiency? How could they change to be more effective?

We'll have to face the problem that Frank's position won't be continued; Melody will have to take on teen services as well. He was very supportive, helped graduate school students at RI as well in using the professional collection. Position was important and is needed. Need coordinators in both children's and teen sections.

Melody has no support staff; sometimes reaches out to us for help. Joining the cooperative is really helpful in doing lots of the support things. Makes it more efficient.

We used to have a VISTA person who helped in our library, but that didn't come through OLIS, came from another program.

What might be considered lower priority thing at OLIS? Are there things they could stop doing??

They've been "leaned down" as much as possible. The staff at OLIS is less than half it was when Melody came.

Other services, like LBH, etc. are things our library can't do; that's what the state library is for.

How is family literacy meshed with what you do?

(Smiles...)

In Providence we have the literacy staff at the library; I wish we had 50 times more staff for them. There are hundreds of people waiting for that service. The first step is free. Literacy is core to the library's mission. Helping people to read, speak, write. It may be a new direction for libraries, but it is essential. They're totally grant funded except one person who's paid with library funds. I can't say enough about how important that program is and how appreciative the users are. There are countless examples of people who've made good.

It's an integral part of library services. Because it's family literacy, the children come into our department when parents are in class.

It's same in Nantucket; you can see the children growing in confidence.

We also tracked the families that participated in additional library programs. The literacy coordinator personally invited participants to a program (and they came!!)

I feel bad for them because they're kinda' quasi—they're not really a part of staff, but they kinda' are. It's odd, they need to coordinate with us more. They need to be a part of us. It's awkward. It needs to be better integrated.

We have 3 literacy places in Cranston. The one is outside the library, but it makes a big difference. Program is absolutely essential. Library is great equalizer in society.

Looking forward, what do you see as the top 2 priorities for coming 5 years?

I just wrote mine; I put in a big push for after school program for that middle age group. Schools are doing; why shouldn't we be doing that at the public library to? Third, 4th, 5th graders should be with us. We're doing more outreach at the library. We want to be a part of the new youth center.

We've talked about going to the middle school in town—to go where the audience is—maybe do a cartoon program, etc. I work in Harmony (the name says it all!); we don't have the issues urban areas do. But I still think libraries should be more in their communities. It happens in urban areas, but we need to do that in my little community too.

Partnerships between schools, recreation depts. and libraries need to happen.

In Providence, the mayor's thing is an after school alliance—for kids a bit older than you're talking about; there are lots of after school things going on. Huge programs. We have to get in there with them; maybe we have to be in other locations after school rather than worrying about getting into the library. We have to have a voice in this movement.

Sometimes it's just making a call—my library has a program in the Y.

I was thinking we have a wonderful model in the children's area; we need to push that into the teen program. Have heard people say that would take funds away from children's programs, but I think we can build on children's things. Expand into middle and high school age groups.

The public is also saying it should be done. 80% of people surveyed said it should be done.

Some of the kids don't want to keep doing the children's programs because my prizes aren't as good.

Question for you....what Melody gets for programs, isn't there a teen component?

State needs to go after funds to do this. We need some one strong to write those grants to get outside money.

We got money for Tutor.com; that begins with grade 4. People can log on and get an actual person/tutor to help them. It was a hard sell. We got the money, but it was a hard sell.

Smithfield is perceived as rich, we aren't perceived as "needy" enough.

I think major emphasis would be personnel. Put money aside (not just LSTA) so that there's a person for children and teens.

We need to have our vision clarified. What we really do for our communities. Professional development needs attention too.

One of problems about after school programs in small libraries is finding time to do outreach; board says you have to be in the library. Our arts council got money to support coverage for me so that I could do outreach. (Look, Listen, Leap in Art)

One of my concerns, the reason for Spanish outreach program, is reaching more of the families through bilingual story times. Reaching families in a different way; valuable for us who aren't familiar with literacy and Spanish—finding out what we could do.

Final say?

I echo about staffing at OLIS; so important to keep youth services staff there. Could be unified youth services, but not have to do projects outside working with youth.

OLIS raises standards really high for us; don't know where we'd get the workshops that we've had with Melody and Frank—they've always been receptive for future programs.

Cranston has good cooperation with schools—we've been fortunate in working with people who are responsible for creating the lists and I have the right to cross off books if they aren't available in the system (so don't have to buy additional copies). I also add on the RI award books to the lists. We work cooperatively on that. I recommend handling it that way elsewhere. And, it's really important to keep Melody and Franks' positions. Unacceptable to youth services not to have them.

Melody needs to have a title that includes Youth Services in it.

Melody is essential; she really is a "sharer;" she comes from meetings and tells us what people are talking about on the national level. She brings all that back to us; is very organized and thoughtful. Otherwise we'd all be scrambling around.

Bilingual services is a huge issue for Providence.

Where does this report go? We're really concerned that OLIS doesn't get enough money. We need to do something beyond this session with people at the state level (above OLIS)

Without this kind of support, our library would never have grown; OSLIS has provided us with so much outreach to the community.

Funding for long term for professional development. I wouldn't have been able to do lots of the programs without the professional development support. I'd also like to see cultural programs integrated into what we can do. With teens programs—have seen tremendous amount of progress, there's a need, would be bad to see that stall. Need a person to coordinate that.

Make sure OLIS exists and keeps the professional collection going. (this the adjunct teacher person) It is a valuable tool and serves library programs at all levels.

Look for models to grow in response to needs. Programs in our libraries for children and teens.

Personnel is the most essential to continue; maintain level of staffing at OLIS; funding; professional library.

It's having a trained librarian in that professional library to get what we need—I read a review and the book's already at OLIS. Although the Reference Round Table wasn't as strong; it was informative—got people together to have people share ideas, etc. Young Adult Round Table doesn't have a Council, but we do some sharing and an annual program.

We have pushed on early literacy and it has been so effective in getting programs into libraries, I'd love to see that done for the tweens; getting programs into the library and making everyone aware. Mother Goose has been great in my community....being trained and being able to bring that into my library (being able to use what I learned in that program elsewhere).

OLIS is so important in providing leadership so we don't all have to do everything ourselves. And it saves us money – not having to buy those professional books.

School Librarians and RILINK

September 28, 2006

There were four participants in the group, including a representative of the school for the deaf, a junior high school librarian, and elementary school librarian and the executive director of RILINK.

Which two programs or services of the OLIS are most important to your library?

OLIS operates delivery and ILL.

Professional development opportunities.

OLIS does a lot of things; they're supportive of schools, summer reading program

Professional collection

Oversee the program of construction

Divide up the state aid

Talking Books

The kids are so excited; RILINK opens another world for them; we get so much support from RILINK and Dorothy. Has made so many things possible.

We just became a member last spring. The accessibility and the availability of the web links are wonderful.

This is the first time the kids have had access to other libraries; the ILL has started to increase.

It's great as a stepping stone for future library users.

This year they were shown how to place a request from home.

My goal is to instruct the parents.

At the same time people are getting some technology skills.

RILINK started with two schools; started with an LSTA grant and money from the RI Dept. of Education. Started with a union catalog. Now the immediate goal is to get the last ten members.

About 400 schools serve about 30% of the public school population; do have 4 private non-profit schools. The number of elementary schools is growing. One represents the only school in her district.

We're automated at the school for the deaf; have a lot of technical issues that most libraries don't have. Supposed to get a new school in a few years, web cams, etc.

One of the real "lacks" is the ability of the deaf students to communicate with the librarians; we managed to get something in one of the plans to get ASL training.

Tend to see the special needs kids more in the library; aides bring them in. An issue for all libraries is finding high interest, low vocabulary materials.

Reluctant readers make RILINK more important.

Even the web links have grade levels.

Cooperative collection development hasn't happened yet.

A barrier to that (cooperative collection development) is that everyone is doing the same thing at the same time.

Would like to see the public library databases available though the RILINK

We can't afford to purchase a lot of databases, but schools and public libraries together can do it.

This year RILINK has an added benefit; WorldBook online.

Do have discounts for other resources.

RILINK is a good expenditure.

The Destiny licenses are not inexpensive.

Dues are \$1.50/student; maximum, of \$1,500 per year.

Initial software license is \$5,000.

Could funds be used to put together a packet?

This year the ILL stuff is a cakewalk!

It takes time—3 years at least to gauge whether it works.

It's an exciting time to be in library services!

Academic/Health Science Librarians

September 29, 2006

There were eight participants in the group, representing academic and health science libraries as well as one public library.

Which two programs or services of the OLIS are most important to your library?

Why?

OLIS manages the delivery system for all of us. We depend on it.

OLIS runs a very good continuing ed program; mostly computer related classes – open to all types of librarians, are very helpful; very good and open to all.

I took web design

OLIS used to take on the expenses of OCLC. One of the things they did was pay OCLC and some interlibrary loan costs.

I take advantage of that; we take advantage of OLIS services.

Resource sharing – they have provided ways for libraries to connect with each other – they have a home grown ILL system

Delivery

They organized the Lib-Futures working group.

Do they do the databases?

Statewide databases is not OLIS although Donna was on the committee. What was OLIS's role?

They were active

Up to now they're not funding the databases. There are some contracts by groups.... That will be funded by State money...

The Lib-futures steering committee came about because several librarians came to RILA and asked. OLIS has been an advisor, but it has to be independent of the state government.

Doesn't OLIS manage the LORI standards?

There was a time; a number of years ago they took on a broader role.

In some ways, over the last 10 or 15 years their role has become fuzzy.

I think that it has always been fuzzy. I don't know that they've ever been really clear.

They tell us what we don't know, the statistics, etc. so we can look at it.

They gather the statistics, and not just for public libraries.

One thing that they provide that we use at East Providence is talking books and large print.

They provide shipping labels for all of the libraries in the state.

I see them as serving as sort of a clearing house. There is really a disconnect between academic, school and public libraries.

What's changed in the last five years?

Their location is a lot more difficult to get to use the professional literature. Frank was great, but getting there was a big obstacle. They could have a lot more public face; if it was easier to get there, people would use the professional collection more.

They tried to start a web site about five years ago aimed at the Statehouse market, but it wasn't publicized well enough. It was both OLIS and the Secretary of State doing that.

The good news is the ILL; we're using the same software as many of the public libraries now. When students come in, the software for HELIN now looks like the one down the street at the public library (just since March).

HELIN spearheaded the effort. Why didn't OLIS spearhead that effort? It wasn't that long that CLAN was with Horizon.

I think that it's a wonderful direction. There shouldn't be multiple systems/catalogs.

I wonder if OLIS could have played a stronger role, providing incentives to choose the same system.

You have to look at the "Independent Man" on the state house!

How could the current programs and services be changed to be more effective?

Ideal arrangement would be one common system – one catalog, one means to access that catalog, everyone with a package of databases. No distinction among various types of libraries.

It would be nice to have more of the collections cataloged; some special collections are not cataloged. There were all of those old things that weren't in the catalogs; they need to get all of that in there.

From a college point of view, those are valuable resources.

Digitizing would be another approach.

Federated searching

What could OLIS stop doing? How could OLIS focus their efforts?

A simplified way of submitting requests

The ILL system is rather crude. There are CLAN requests, LORI requests, HELIN requests, DOCLINE.

There are at least five different systems and different slips when you put them into the ILL box. It's ridiculous.

Start with general reference materials; if you look at what CLAN buys and what HELIN buys, there is some overlap.

The publics were getting some of the products more cheaply than the academics and the health science libraries.

We're part of some of the HELIN package. Incorporated in CLAN are several things that we want in the health group.

I'm in the high school library and I'm not seeing a way to get to these databases. That would be a very useful tool... some kind of a universal card that provides you access to the databases.

You shouldn't have to do that.

The conversation about EBSCO was that they threw in the health resources because they thought that it wouldn't get much use.

I'd be interested in whether the Statewide database group came up with a list of databases.

This is a situation in which everyone knows that they're being sneaky. We've done some polling this week and found that EBSCO tells a different story.

Digitization is in its infancy; HELIN has a digital commons effort.

HELIN as an organization itself, but each institution is making its own decision.

Right now there is funding through grants, but the maintenance of the effort would be difficult. How do we sustain the effort?

Funding... the work to be done... the staff, the equipment, etc...

There is a lot of information that needs to be digitized.
The Rhode Island Historical– do they belong to any of the consortium?
Our local museum (RISD site) is very limited in terms of what you can see in terms of images, treasures. If there was funding available there, that could be made available.

What about the Heritage Museum?
Providence Public Library –
College archives... some of those could be digitized
URI, Providence Public, etc. one of the areas that we're working in is student master's theses.

The challenge is with identifying a few databases or what to digitize. How do you start a conversation like that? I would love to see the state recognize that every institution is a reflection of the people who live here.
I could foresee OLIS as the entity to gather the materials to pool into the Rhode Island digital memory.

There is a common denominator; there are a lot of barriers that need to be broken down. We don't view each other as equals in the library community...
She's a school librarian.... He's an academic librarian...

We're almost paralyzed by the enormity of the effort and we're paralyzed.
One of our problems is that we all think we have different patrons and they're really all the same people. We're just serving them at different times/points in their lives.
The reference questions that we have here at the public library are often similar to those in other places.

How would you react as a director of a library if OLIS said, "we're going to develop a model and we'll send somebody to do it." (digitization?)

We need to know what we have in common.
Before we start with the special projects, let's figure out how to share the databases so we have everything in one place. We worry too much about what we don't have in common.

How does OLIS help us with it?
I served on a committee and we worked on shared resources; working groups are a good way to make this work.
That's nothing new!
The ILL working group
The LORI committee dissolved. The people who held the power ignored the committee.
If people at OLIS are doing things like that, we don't know about it.

OLIS is too fragmented. They're in a defense mode. They have to be careful; they need to be a partner in progress.

It did occur to me that I don't know anything about how OLIS is structured; who do they report to. The fact that people don't know that may undercut the authority of that.

Until Ann Parent left, it was not even appropriated. It was guaranteed funded; wasn't a line item.

More disclosure about financial, etc. would be good.

There is the Library Board.

As a sidebar... the OLIS people aren't classified positions.

Final say?

I would like to see the statewide databases. Not sure if its OLIS or not.. OLIS needs a more clearly defined, prominent role.

I pretty much echo that same sentiment... better definition for OLIS. I want somebody to be the leadership organization.

I want the one catalog, one database package, etc.

Again. the delivery system is right on.

Coordination is absolutely key; I'm glad for the delivery system.

I wanted to step back to the idea of digitizing. We have a lot in common, but there is a lot of distinction as well. Public documents aren't sexy, but they are valuable resources as well. State government docs...

There are some weaknesses at the state level there as well. I would like to see an agency like OLIS to work with other state agencies. The Department of Health Library was closed. We now have a virtual library and what is that... don't know what it will be.

I wanted to bring up the funding... We all put money in NELINET... here's this external agency that does some purchasing, etc. What IS the best way for RHODE ISLAND?

What money do we get that could be put into a bigger pot?

I agree with pretty much all before me... don't know what to add. OLIS needs to be a key player with the various networks.

I would like to see more funding for school libraries and hospital libraries to have Innovative Interfaces too.

I'll concur with my colleagues. A single uniform catalog and a database program. A little more ask for forgiveness and less ask for permission

We don't know about the big picture at OLIS. If they could prepare a annual report that was simple and presented widely so that people would take them more seriously, that would help. We're not sure where we are. We all need to do that kind of thing to help everyone understand the picture widely. I want a better location for them physically. If they're going to be playing a clearing house role, I would like to see them play a more active role in RILA as far as telling their story.

I concur with all.. more transparency and communication... more unification vision.

Not sure that this even belongs in the report.

I don't know that OLIS knows that the individual groups want OLIS at the table as an active participant.

I do want to credit OLIS with the grant that enabled the Health Science Libraries to join HELIN and set the tone for the other networks to do the same thing.

It caused CLAN to do something and now all of these other plans are popping up, school librarians as well.